WORKING FOR JESUS

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WORKING FOR JESUS;

OR,

INDIVIDUAL EFFORT

FOR THE

SALVATION OF PRECIOUS SOULS.

BY

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NEW EDITION, REVISED AND ENLARGED.

"He that winneth souls is wise." Prov. 11:30.

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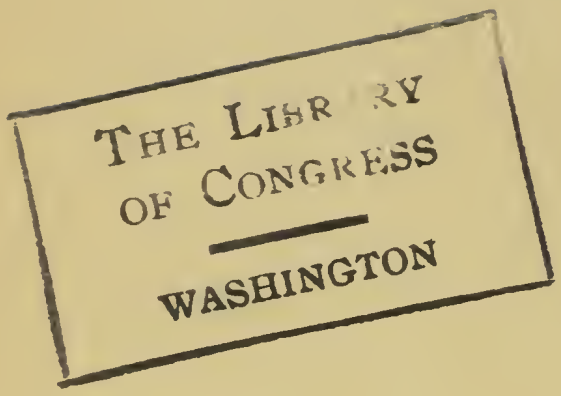

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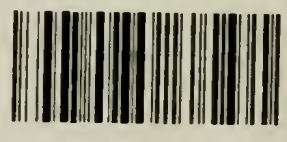

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RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED

TO THE

YOUNG PEOPLE'S SOCIETIES OF CHRISTIAN ENDEAVOR.

My Dear Fellow Endeavorers:

In dedicating this book to you I do so knowing that, as you endeavor to do what Christ would have you do, you will seek the salvation of immortal souls. And more than that: you will never cease to do so, because it is not only His will but it has become your delight and your joy. It will be an outstanding feature of your life. You will sow beside all waters. You will be instant in season, out of season. At first you may be timid and fearful, but as the commands of Christ sound in your ears, "Let him that heareth say, Come," "Son, go work to-day in my vineyard," "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven," and as your heart is touched by their motive force, you will be like the apostles who cried, "We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard." The word will be "like fire shut up in your bones." You must speak, to be eased of your burden of heart.

Of all the good works that we endeavorers do this

is the best, the most influential, the most enduring. We increase the band of believers. We multiply the workers in the vineyard of the Lord. To encourage to this service, to point out different ways of working, to supply motives of the highest nature and to stimulate the individual so as not to grow weary in well-doing this book has been written. Like the famous Puritan preacher, Thomas Brooks, I may say, "I have made it as pleasurable as time would permit, so that it might be the more profitable to the reader, and that I might the better take the young man by a holy craft, which is a high point of heavenly wisdom." I have packed it full of incident and story that every reader might know that in this high and Christly work he is not singular, but in sympathy with the best of all ages.

This work may be concurrent with any other work. Whatever your occupation is you may weave into its texture the golden thread, and by and by, when all else perishes, this will remain. May the loving Saviour so bless this book to you that you will work while it is day; for "the night cometh, when no man can work."

"Work, for the night is coming,
Work through the morning hours;
Work while the dew is sparkling,
Work 'mid springing flowers;
Work when the day grows brighter,
Work in the glowing sun;
Work, for the night is coming
When man's work is done."

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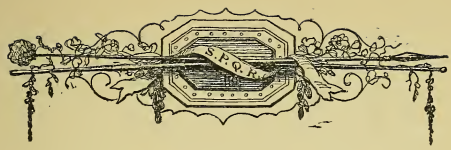
PREFACE.

In our day a great problem presents itself for solution ; namely, How are the masses to be Christianized? How are all the grades of society, from the lowest to the highest, to be brought to Jesus? Any word that will throw light on this important question, and clear it of difficulties or incite to its being wrought out satisfactorily, is of value. It is acknowledged that when ministers of the gospel have done their best there is still a vast outlying field untouched. The ordained ministry is only a part of God's plan. Here the mistake has been made. Ministers have had all the work cast upon them and thus one of the chief channels of vitality has been taken from the church ; leaving it cold, heartless, and dead. The ministry has its place in the Divine order and we should grievously err if we were to disparage it. But God's plan is broader, deeper and more thorough than mere clerical service : it embraces ALL who believe ; ALL who know and love and live in Jesus. Upon each one, in his peculiar sphere, he calls for ministry. And, believers

being of every rank and grade in society, through them, in their own positions, he seeks to subject the world to his sceptre. Each one has his own world—where live those who know him, those he can reach and influence, those who will more readily receive the gospel at his lips than from any other—and therefore in that sphere he is to work, living there and laboring there for Christ, casting himself into the moral and spiritual conflict in his own peculiar way, that by the grace of God he may gain some. The light of the Lord is to shine through him, into eyes that are dim or darkened, that they may see. The peace of God is to pour through his heart into the souls of sorrowing ones that they may have rest. The power of God is to flow through him as a channel and take captive the hearts and wills of those who are under the sway of evil. However unfit for service he may seem, he, by his relation to those about him, by his sympathy with them, by his knowledge of their conditions, by his habits of thought and modes of expression, is best able to reach them. This is the principle on which God acts: "For every high-priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins; who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way, for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity." This is the natural way, and therefore the easiest. It has been proved so in the labors of Harlan

Page and others who have imbibed his spirit. Like draws to like. The poor sympathize most with the poor, the rich with the rich. These natural laws are to be put under tribute in the service of the King. The renewed heart of the beggar or the merchant or the prince is to act in fullest freedom, under the power of the truth, in the hand of the Spirit, in the proclamation of the good news, each saying to his neighbor, "Know the Lord." Then all shall know Him, from the least unto the greatest. The great work shall be compassed.

Individual effort for the salvation of precious souls is what is wanted to-day. Then shall public preaching be more prolific, churches better filled, thousands of souls saved, and the earth blessed.



WORKING FOR JESUS.

I.

TO EVERY MAN HIS WORK.—Mark 13:34.

IT is a delightful truth, though in our day degenerated in great measure into a platform commonplace, that Christianity is adapted to the wants and condition of every human being. It is generally admitted that it is the only remedy for the moral and spiritual ruin into which man is fallen. The question, then, with which we have to deal is: How is it to be applied to dead hearts? How is it to be brought into contact with sin-stricken souls? How shall it be made effectual to the regeneration and renewal of man's nature? Judging from the teachings of the Holy Word, it is God's intention that all who become subjects of his grace should also become promoters of his glory. As soon as a man has accepted Jesus as the Christ, and is thereby brought into the relation of sonship with God, the word goes forth,

"Son, go *work* TO-DAY in my vineyard." As soon as the quickening voice of Jesus penetrates the soul's ear the behest bears in upon the new creature the great duty of the new life. "Let him that heareth say, Come!" It is as if our Saviour said, "I can have no idlers, I must have no drones; engage yourselves at once. Occupy till I come." And in answer to this, if the right spirit prevails, the apostle's response will be repeated: "The love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if One died for all, then were all dead; and that he died for all, THAT *they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves,* BUT UNTO HIM WHICH DIED FOR THEM, AND ROSE AGAIN."

This is the highly-privileged position in which God places his sons, so that they can truly say "We are laborers together with God." The renewed heart holds with the Divine appointment, and joyously works for the salvation of others. Its very constitution leads it in this direction. Entered into the rest, the bliss, the freedom, the fullness of the new life, the first impulse is to call others to the enjoyment of the same. Having found a Physician that can cure the deep-seated disease of the soul, the Christian must recommend Him to all who so suffer. Translated from the cold darkness of death into the warm, cheerful light of life, the soul sings sweet songs, and long and loud, without fear of being heard; yea, it desires to declare God's righteousness. As Bishop Hall says, "No good man would be

saved alone." This is borne out by the testimony of all history and experience. Andrew, having found the Messiah to the joy of his heart, goes immediately in search of his own brother Simon, and tells him the glad tidings, "We have found the Christ," and both follow Jesus. Philip, being called himself, findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, "We have found him of whom Moses in the law and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of Joseph." And beating down his objection, "Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?" with "Come and see," he brought him to Jesus. The woman of Samaria at Jacob's Well, having drank other water than that she came to draw, is so quickened by it that she must leave her water-pot and go her way into the city and cry aloud, "Come see a man that told me all things that ever I did! Is not this the Christ?" Noble heroine, to carry her cross that very day and hour. What was the result of her preaching? A rich harvest of souls. Many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him for the saying of the woman. These, again, besought him to tarry with them, which he did two days. And many more believed because of his own word. In these cases we have a beautiful exemplification of the out-working of the new nature. He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit, and the cry of that spirit is, "I must be about my Father's business." "I delight to do Thy will: yea, Thy law is within my heart."

But an important question may arise here ; namely, Why are all saved souls not at work? Why do not all occupy some post in service ? We answer, with sadness of heart, that there is no doubt that this spirit of love to souls and endeavor to save them may be checked or suppressed. Alas ! it is a fact that too often, through carnal causes, it is ruthlessly trampled out or trifled away on useless or unworthy objects. An emotion may evaporate without doing any good. Love may leak out through little occasions and never lift any soul to light. Desires of great strength may effect nothing, because they are not properly directed and controlled. One of the most mighty and prevalent causes of inactivity in this ministry is the taking heed to other voices than those of our Lord ; the giving place to other considerations than those he urges upon us ; in one word, the subjection of our will to another master, whether that master be ourselves, or our friends, or custom—which is Satan's great instrument for controlling men ; sometimes through their fears, at others by their pride, and at others again by their profit. If the believer would work for the salvation of souls he must hear *Christ's voice alone*, giving to that all his ear, all his heart, all his will. He must never forget that he occupies a priestly position. He, like Aaron and his sons under the Old Testament economy, is consecrated by the blood to God's service alone. He is separated and set apart for the hearing of God's

word, the doing of God's will and the running on God's messages. That is the meaning of the blood of sacrifice put on the tip of the right ear and the tip of the thumb of the right hand and the tip of the great toe of the right foot. He is wholly yielded to God, to live for him in a whole-hearted service. This entire surrender is the key not only to successful endeavor, but also to joyful, delightful, satisfying service, so that the worker can truly say, "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me and to finish his work."

Now, to direct desire into duty, to lead love to noble labor, to control emotion and guide it into fitting expressions, is the grand purpose of all the commands that compass the believer's heart with waking, warning and work-inspiring voice. To engage the believer in a blessed "deedful" life is the great end of all the words of precious promise that gem the pages of the Holy Scripture. "Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick, and it giveth light to all that are in the house. LET YOUR LIGHT SO SHINE"—the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ being graciously given you for the purpose—"that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven." "Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord."

These utterances embrace *all* believers. Not one is

omitted, not one is overlooked. The spiritual temple is to be edified to-day in the same manner as the wall of Jerusalem was built under Nehemiah : each man is to take his place and work and watch and, if need be, fight. There is no liberty given to any to defer entering on this important duty. *To-day, to-day,* is the call. "Say not ye, There are yet four months and then cometh harvest! Behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes and look on the fields, for they are white already to harvest. And he that reapeth receiveth wages and gathereth fruit unto life eternal, that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together." As every leaf contributes to the life and strength of the tree, so every believer in the body of Christ is to aid in augmenting the life and strength of the church by striving to add to the saved, the sacramental host of God's elect. Indeed, the Church—that is, all who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as their sin-bearing Saviour, wherever they are and under whatever denominational banner they may range themselves—is only a vast army under the captaincy of Christ seeking to make conquest of the world for God and his reign of righteousness. Every Spirit-baptized soldier has his post to hold, his work to do, his honor to maintain. Every one, if he will, may be an angel of mercy—strewing his world-way with blessings and benedictions, imparting sweetest comforts and consolations—or else he may be a messenger of evil. There is no middle

ground, no neutral position. "He that is not with me is *against* me."

He who knows the honor of this work will not willingly lose its rich reward, its delicious joys. Rutherford said, "It were my heaven, till I come home, even to spend this life in gathering in some to Christ." Thomas Brooks, the renowned Puritan, said, "Opportunities of doing service for Christ and for souls are worth more than a world." "The winning of souls to Christ is my highest ambition in this world." Duncan Matheson, the earnest evangelist, was offered by a gentleman an important situation with a large salary, which, though penniless, he at once declined and afterwards said, "What! did he think I could give up preaching Christ for £200 a year?" Robert Annan, of Dundee, though in lowly and straitened circumstances, having an opportunity afforded him of bettering his worldly condition by removing to Glasgow, said, "*No;* God is blessing my poor endeavors here just now and I will not go. SAVING SOULS IS BETTER THAN MAKING MONEY." William Burns, the apostolic missionary, left the land he loved and sought other shores as scenes of soul-saving as soon as his ministry ceased to be fruitful at home.* His soul burned to save men. Jesus

* In confirmation of this fact we have this sentence in one of his letters addressed to the Rev. Horatius Bonar, D.D., as he was leaving England: "My way seems to have been very plain in the matter hitherto; and yet you can easily see that it is a dark and

himself is our example, the perfect example of his people in this heavenly mission. "Follow me," he cries, "and I will make you fishers of men."

Turning a deaf ear to the call of our Lord sadly mars the perfection of our character and lays the axe to the root of our God-given manhood. There is a beautiful completeness in the Christian character, as it is sketched in the Word, that cannot be gained without working for Jesus. We may believe in Christ, read the Holy Word, pray in public and in secret and be strictly attentive on ordinances ; but without corresponding works, as the outcome of all this, all these are ineffective, fruitless, joyless.

Listen to these plain truths : "We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." Eph. 2:10. "Ye are the light of the world ;" "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven." Matt. 5:14, 16. Faith in Christ is to reveal itself in work for him. Having the root of reliance on Christ as our sacrifice for sin, we are to bring forth the fruit of holy service to him. If we do not work for Jesus our faith is a dead faith, an empty profession. "For as the body without the

solemn dispensation either to myself or to those I leave behind, *when one of the grounds of my departure is the want of any special blessing at home."—Life of Rev. John Milne, p.* 182.

spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also." James 2:26.

Many no doubt deceive themselves in this way: they think of good works, they imagine good works, building castles in the air; they even speak of good works and go not farther, yet conceiving that they have really done something when really nothing has come forth as a result. The deed that embodies the thought, that gives living expression to the imagining and actuality to the speech, has not been done. The man has been in cloudland dreaming and not at all engaged in the real work of the world. Our Lord in closing his sermon on the mount said, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." Matt. 7:21. Alas! with how many does the saying go for the doing and the thinking for the thing itself! What self deceivers men are! Oh how they delude themselves, going on even to the judgment-seat of Christ under false impressions! See Matt. 7:22, 23.

Too many have this one-sided development, if development it can be called. "By their fruits ye shall know them." There is not a shadow of such a character as this in Jesus. "He went about doing good" is the summary of that self-sacrificing life he lived; and he left us an example that we should follow in his steps. Working for Jesus in seeking the salvation of

precious souls brings every grace into exercise and every power into action. Just as the infant, tossing its little limbs and throwing about its arms, sends the fresh blood tingling along the veins laden with life and health and strength, giving color to the cheek, light to the eye, power to the muscle and ring to the voice; so caring for souls calls into exercise every spiritual grace: faith and knowledge and prayer and patience and holiness of life. Many of God's dear children go mourning all their days, shrouded in gloom, simply because they do nothing for Jesus. A little work would put all to rights and fill them with rejoicings. Sweet old Sibbes says, "Those that are fruitful in their places never want good assurances of salvation. It is lazy, lukewarm Christians that want assurance." Dr. John Owen, that prince of theologians, bears this testimony: "Great opportunities for service neglected and great gifts not improved are oftentimes the occasion of plunging the soul into great depths. Gifts are given to trade with for God; opportunities are the market-days for that trade. To napkin up the one and let slip the other will end in trouble and disconsolation. Disquietudes and perplexities of heart are worms that will certainly breed in the rust of unexercised gifts. God loseth a revenue of glory and honor by such slothful souls and he will make them sensible of it. I know some at this day whom omissions of opportunities for service are ready to sink into the grave." David

Sandeman, a devoted young Christian, writes thus in his diary: "Again and again I find it confirmed that the more I am engaged in working for the Lord the more do heavenly and becoming thoughts possess me." On another occasion he says, "Felt that important principle confirmed to-day—that the more I engage in duty the more I am glad with a holy joy." William Carvosso, an earnest, believing class-leader, though much weighed down through oppressive outward circumstances, yet amid all writes: "I was much blessed in laboring to make myself useful to souls." By soul-seeking our lights burn clear, the salt retains its savor, the epistle is readable; otherwise, all is confusion.

How many empty excuses are offered for neglect of duty in serving the Lord!

Some try to purchase exemption from active service by giving of their means. The Lord claims that and far more. The rich are but his stewards. They are intrusted with the Lord's treasure that they may use it for his glory and the extension of his kingdom. And though they so use it they can never thereby release themselves from ministry in seeking the good of souls. "We are not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, . . . but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." We cannot repay that with money. God asks our life; the devotion of all our powers to his service and glory. "Ye are not your own." Most men think

far different from this. But God declares it: "Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your bodies and in your spirits, which are God's." Lady Powerscourt says, "I would also enforce it on myself, that *to give money is the least gift we have to give in token of love.* Love, while producing self-denial, also produces generosity in every way in which we can show kindness. *Love is not always counting its pence.*"

Others, again, are ready to murmur at the work of those who in all faithfulness are seeking to answer God's gracious demands on them for glory. Fault-finding, they fancy, frees them from their obligations. Hindrance they take to be their peculiar privilege. Foolish souls! they are a heavy burden to the people of God and to themselves. They are enemies of the Lord; they hurt and harass his sons in their service; for, saith Jesus, "He that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad." Did these mistaken ones listen to the voice of the Lord, and enter into labor, they would very soon repent of their bitter words and severe judgments, and heartily sympathize with their brethren and endeavor to sustain them in their trying duties. Those who carp at the efforts of others to do all they can for Jesus never do so for the glory of God. It is too evident that it is a defensive stroke entirely—beating back the strong condemnation that falls upon them from the active and exemplary lives of others.

Those who indulge in fault-finding often do so in an exceedingly pious manner. As it is written, "The words of his mouth were smoother than butter, but war was in his heart; his words were softer than oil, yet were they drawn swords."* This spirit is evil. Shame on those who are professed friends and yet practical foes of Jesus!

Another class, and that a numerous one, think that being saved themselves their only duty is to enjoy their salvation. We are not saved for our own comfort, although that arises out of salvation, but we are saved for the glory of God. It is the very worst sort of selfishness, being brought safe ashore from the wreck to sit down and see others drowning while we have hands to help. God's commands, the natural outgoings of the new creation and the state of the world form a threefold protest against this selfish Christianity. All unite in saying, Up and work! "Why stand ye here all the day idle?" Charles Spurgeon utters a much needed thought bearing on this point when he says, "I think we lack one evidence of the perfect reconciliation of our souls to God until we get something to do for him." And, "There is no fellowship with Christ that seems to me so vivid, so real to the soul, as when you get to try and win a soul for him." "I like nothing that makes me feel easy about my fellow creatures' souls."

* Psa. 55:21.

Others, again, excuse themselves by saying, "We are not gifted as others; we are slow of speech; we are but children; we can do nothing." Now it is not great ability that God asks, nor eloquent declamations, nor poetic fancies, nor philosophical theories; but the heart touched with the truth uttering itself. And this every man has who is Christ's. God asks only what we really can do. If the work seem to be far beyond our power, we are to consider, with Dr. John Owen, that "the duties that God in an ordinary way requires at our hands are not proportioned to what strength we have in ourselves, but to what help and relief is laid up for us in Christ." Paul's joy was that he could do all things through Christ strengthening him. We may without any error assure ourselves that every believer in Jesus has, if not ten, certainly one talent intrusted to his using. The faithful use of the smallest ability, the narrowest resources, may bring much honor to God and largely help to fill his garner with fine wheat. God looks on remote as well as immediate results. His eye gathers all into one view. As an acorn in the soil will give birth to a tree that will produce thousands of acorns, so it is with man planted in Christ: he brings forth fruit, and that fruit is the seed whence "much fruit" may be gathered. No one is to turn from this honorable service however weak his powers may be. These powers put in exercise may unfold great treasures of ability, great fountains of strength.

If this be not the case their employment will at least strengthen them and enlarge them. Often do we see small ability effecting grander things than large ability, simply because the lesser is properly and patiently used, while the larger is laid aside and neglected. Remember this: "If there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath and not according to that he hath not."

Others still look to those who have ability and hold it idle in Christ's cause, however well used in their own interests, and plead their example for neglect of duty. "He is better fitted than I for service and he is idle; it would be presumption in me to try to do what he never attempts. Surely it cannot be my duty if it is not his, seeing he is so well qualified." So, many seek to thrust aside God's claims. But this cannot be. The inactivity of others cannot release us from our obligation. However plausible our plea, it is unavailing. "Every one of us shall give account of HIMSELF unto God." No excuse can set aside God's injunction, "Son, GO WORK TO-DAY in my vineyard."

II.

SON, GO WORK TO-DAY IN MY VINEYARD. MATT. 21 : 28.

WELL, then, it may be asked, where is the Christian to work? In one light this question is proper and in place ; that is if it arise out of a desire to labor where largest gains may reward the toil and the sphere be not clearly seen, or if it spring from ignorance as to the teaching of the Word with regard to the position of the believer in every-day Christian duty. In another light this question is highly improper, because it betrays a sad misapprehension of the nature of salvation. It proceeds upon the destructive error that working for Christ is something aside from or beyond living in Christ—something that does not naturally and necessarily flow from being a new creature in Christ Jesus. This is a very prevalent and exceedingly hurtful error. In Christ we are new creatures ; he is our Lord and we are under law to him. "He that saith he abideth in Him ought to walk even as He walked." He pleased not himself ; he did not his own will. Hence, following Jesus, it is not left us to choose what we shall be and what we shall do. "*Ye are Christ's,*" saith the

Holy Ghost. "None of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, WE LIVE UNTO THE LORD; whether therefore we live, or die, we are the Lord's." The sons of God are able to say, "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." Christ in us creates a fruitful life.*

Having thus spoken we may now answer the question, Where is the Christian to work? The royal commission is, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." This applies with equal force to the Christian and the ordained minister. It embraces all who know the gospel of the grace of God. All have a ministry to fulfil, for all are kings and priests to God. We know that all are not called to be pastors, evangelists and teachers,† but all are preachers.

Those who are brought to a knowledge of the truth through the ministry of the apostles "continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship and in breaking of bread and in prayers; . . . and they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." That the apostles' "*doctrine*" was not a selfish, sleepy thing, warring against the workings of the new life in the

* John 15:5. † Eph. 4.

soul, is seen from the scripture just quoted. But this is more fully borne out by an incident that happened in the early history of the church.* No doubt this incident is but a repetition of what took place in Jerusalem every day, only it is not recorded until opposition to the truth disperses the disciples and discloses the real burden of their life—preaching Jesus the Nazarene. "They that were scattered abroad," on account of the great persecution of the church which was at Jerusalem, "went EVERYWHERE *preaching the word.*" Again: "Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution which arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phenice and Cyprus and Antioch, *preaching the word* to none but unto the Jews only. And some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene, which, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Grecians, *preaching the Lord Jesus.* And the hand of the Lord was with them; and a great number believed and turned unto the Lord."

They had believed and therefore they had to speak, testifying the grace of God. Out of full hearts they bore witness to the resurrection power of the Saviour. They had no need of other consecration than that of the anointing of the Holy Ghost, which they enjoyed through faith in Jesus. Having this, the love of Christ constrained them wherever they went to preach the gospel. Separated from *home* they might have been

* Acts 8:4; 11:19-21.

silent had they known only our modern Christian prudence and propriety; but they must assent to the impulses of the new life—they must obey the Lord's command, "As ye go into all the world preach the gospel to every creature." They could never be at "*home*" here, because they were pilgrims and strangers as all their fathers were. Heaven was their fatherland; heaven was their home. And so it is to-day. This being the case, the mission field is the wide, wide world: close at home as well as beyond the sea; at our elbow, in our steps, all around our life wherever we are. There is no disorganization of life by the introduction of Christian principles, rather the perfect completion of it; it is now life such as God would have it, and, being so, it is to burn as a calcium light to his glory and the inbringing of his kingdom. As Morley Punshon sings:

"Work for the good that is nighest,
Dream not of greatness afar;
That glory is ever the highest
Which shines upon men as they are.
Work, though the world would defeat you;
Heed not its slander and scorn;
Nor weary till angels shall greet you
With smiles through the gates of the morn."

Ordinarily, *and always at first*, the scene of the Christian's labor is where his every-day duty is; where the stream of his active life flows; if it runs down the thronging streets, or fills the merchant's office or the

mechanic's workshop, or stands in the crowded mart or bustling market, or gathers in the surging crowd, or circulates round the hearthstone, or rushes along the rail. Wherever it is, or under whatever conditions it may move, the command enjoins faithful work for Jesus. He is to sow beside all waters, let down the net into all seas. Considering no circumstances as unfavorable, he is to unfurl the banner God has given him because of the truth, and preach the gospel:

> "The old, old story of unseen things above;
> Of Jesus and his glory, of Jesus and his love."

Christ calls that "my vineyard," God's garden for raising fruit that shall rejoice and satisfy his heart. What a beautiful designation! And, mark you, it is not merely a poetic designation—it is truth. It is not mere fancy—it is fact. Your surroundings, however unlovely and repulsive and miserable, are God's vineyard. Weeds may be growing in it, the paths may be overrun by ugly thorns and brambles, the trellises on which the vines lift themselves may be broken down, the stones may not be gathered out, it may be in a ruinous condition—what may seem to you an utterly hopeless condition. Yet it is God's vineyard for his loving and obedient "son" to labor in. A spot, however externally unattractive, dear to God's heart because there are precious souls there. It matters nothing to him whether it be a lane or an alley or a tenement, or a street where the devil reigns and holds high

carnival; there is his vineyard! Clear it up. Gather out the stones, destroy the weeds, clear the paths, lift up the vines, restore it, by God's help, so that it may be said: "My beloved is gone down into his garden, to the beds of spices, to feed in the gardens, and to gather lilies." Song of Sol. 6:2.

How numerous are the ways of working! Each one is instructed by his circumstances and by his gifts and opportunities as to what he shall do. God opens up his way before his face and lays work ready to his hand. We mention some of these:

Words dropped by the wayside are not lost. "God's seed will come to God's harvest," as Rutherford said. When Mr. Pennefather, well known in connection with the Mildmay Conferences, was leaving Barnet, he met an old soldier in the street to whom he said, after listening to his strong expressions of regret at his departure, "I am going on another journey; will you come with me?" Then adding a few earnest words he left him, and from that day the old man started on his heavenward way. Faithful dealing with perishing souls in the market-place may be as productive of fruit there as in the religious assembly. An earnest talk on eternal interests while walking the street may arouse attention and regard in the soul. Salutations may bear stirring thoughts. Felix Neff's word to the stranger, who he supposed was his friend, is familiar, as also its blessed results: "Friend, how is it with thy

soul?" Kindly and consistent demeanor in the workshop may win a ready way for any words the Spirit may give us to speak concerning the Saviour and his great salvation. A shoemaker narrated this incident one day in a Fulton Street prayer-meeting, New York: "I was a bootmaker in Ann Street years ago, and a dissipated man and an associate of gamblers. One day a gentleman, I do not know who, after buying a pair of boots asked me if I would do him a favor. I said, 'Yes.' He then asked me to attend the Fulton Street prayer-meeting for a few moments the next day. I promised and I went. From that visit I date my change of heart. Back of it all was a praying mother. Her last words to me before she died were, 'Sam, you don't know my God, but you will be brought to him.'" Travel affords numberless opportunities for testimony to the love of Jesus that should always be improved. One day William C. Burns was walking to Kilsyth and he tells us this: "I first made up to two boys going home from school who seemed very ignorant of Jesus. I spoke to them, gave them tracts, and shortly prayed with them on the road. I then met Mr. Lusk going home, with whom I also prayed on the road. At the Craigmarloch Bridge I met Widow Mitchell and her daughter Agnes, an old school companion of my own. With them I prayed, going for a little into the house." Is not that simply grand! What devotion to Jesus this shows. William C. Burns was a man in whom

our Lord's words were fulfilled: "He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." He was a blessing wherever he went and to all he met. Business and lower interests ought not, yea, must not, displace higher interests. The Divine order is, "*Seek ye first* the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things [earthly necessaries] shall be added unto you." This order cannot be violated with impunity. The soul is more valuable than the body; eternity is more momentous than time. And now is the season, the point of time, to attend to the salvation of the one and prepare for the enjoyment of the other.

Friendly visits ought ever to be turned to the best account. The good news spoken then in the quiet confidence of brotherly and sisterly communications comes sweetly home. Dr. Payson, being on one occasion kindly entertained, said to his friends on leaving the house, "You have treated me with much kindness and hospitality, for which I sincerely thank you. Allow me to ask you one question before we part: How do you treat my Master?" This simple though striking question led ultimately to the conversion of that entire household.

Too frequently other themes steal away the time that ought to be given to the "Chiefest among ten thousand," and leave the heart dry as the desert sand or wrung with remediless remorse. An incident in the

life of Dr. Chalmers supplies a touching illustration. Returning from a journey to the south of Scotland "he visited a nobleman near Peebles. On a favorite theme—pauperism and its cure—he kept the circle of friends gathered there entranced, especially an old Highland laird, who was riveted by the lucid details that he gave. They sat late. Dr. Chalmers' bedroom was just across the lobby from the old laird's room. As the doctor was undressing he heard a strange sound thence and then a deep groan. He hastened in. In a few minutes more all the visitors followed. The old man drew but a few breaths more and died. Dr. Chalmers loved souls. He gazed with outstretched hands as he bent over the clay. He was the picture of distress; the first to break the silence. 'Never in my life did I see or did I feel before this moment the meaning of that text, *Preach the Word; be instant in season and out of season.* Had I known that my venerable friend was within a few minutes of eternity I would have addressed myself earnestly to him. I would have preached unto him and unto you Jesus Christ and him crucified. I would have urged him and you, with all earnestness befitting the subject, to prepare for eternity. You would have thought it, and you would have pronounced it, out of season. But ah! it would have been in season, both as it respects him and as it respects you.'" Fidelity to the Master demands the discharge of duty in all relations, and especially in this.

How vivid and impressive is the parting scene of the Rev. Charles Simeon and his brother. Being summoned to his deathbed, he hastened to obey. As he entered the room his brother extended his hand and with deep emotion said, "I am dying, and you never warned me of the state I was in and of the danger to which I was exposed from neglecting the salvation of my soul." "Nay, my brother," replied Mr. Simeon, "I took every reasonable opportunity of bringing the subject of religion before your mind and frequently alluded to it in my letters." "Yes," exclaimed the dying man, "you did; but that was not enough. You never came to me, closed the door, and took me by the collar of my coat and told me that I was unconverted and that if I died in that state I should be lost. And now I am dying, and but for God's grace I might have been forever undone!" This scene was never effaced from Mr. Simeon's mind. Let it teach us how *earnest* and *persevering* we should be in watching for souls. Far from us be the thought of intrusion when we address men on a theme so vital, so important, yea, so transcendent. To speak is an imperative duty. On the leaf of one of Robert Murray M'Cheyne's note-books was found this memorandum: "*Rule worth remembering:* When visiting in a family, whether ministerially or otherwise, speak particularly to the *strangers* about eternal things. Perhaps God has brought you together just to save that soul." Dr. Watts says, "He

that has the happy talent for parlor preaching has sometimes done more for Christ and souls in the space of a few moments than by the labor of hours and days in the usual course of preaching in the pulpit."

Often in conversing with anxious inquirers, whose companions I know to be members of churches, I have asked if they have never been spoken to by them of Jesus; the answer was made in astonishment, "No; they had only complained that they had not greater liberty to attend dances, parties, etc." This reveals dark depths of degeneracy. No wonder the world scoffs at religion. No wonder men question professions of Christianity. The light burns dim, the salt is savorless, the epistle is a blot.

Where words cannot conveniently be spoken *tracts may very properly be used.* But see to it that they are gospel tracts—plain, brief, pointed. Use those you have tested and tried yourself first. How many have employed this means! men of the greatest gifts; men who had no need on account of want of ability; men like Richard Knill, William Hewitson, W. C. Burns, D. L. Moody, David Sandeman, John Wesley, and hundreds beside of like talents. They used them because the tract speaks when they could not, it is near when they are not, it can be appealed to again and again, and read and thought of, till the seed of the Word it carries in its basket enters into the heart and germinates and springs up there and brings forth the

fruit of a new life. In the brief and precious journal of William Hewitson we have these entries: "During a walk distributed some tracts." "Strong in the Lord, I went out to walk having tracts and a New Testament in Spanish." Charles Spurgeon often gave away as a tract a penny New Testament. Mr. D. L. Moody gives away tons of tracts at the church doors where his immense gatherings are held. William C. Burns has this entry in his diary: "Walked with Mr. Milne, distributing many tracts and having many interesting conversations with persons on the road." Another entry is: "At Cumbernauld I left the coach, after giving tracts to all on it and in it (a practice I intend to follow wherever I go, as eminently calculated to advance the salvation of souls), and walked over the hill toward Kilsyth." Richard Knill began working for Jesus in this way. This indeed is usually the Christian's "first works" in the world's great field of battle. And it is a good way to begin. The following incident, showing how tracts should be distributed, is given by a London minister:

"I had been recommended to Mr. M'Cheyne and my school had been commended to his care. He had at that time just published the beautiful tract entitled 'I Love the Lord's Day,' and I was asked to call on him at his house: he wanted to see me; he would give me some of these tracts to distribute. I went. Just as he was in the act of showing me the street door, all at

once he said, 'Do you lift up your heart and ask God's blessing on each of these tracts before you give it away? You cannot expect it to be blessed unless you do.' I answered, 'No, I had never thought of such a thing; nobody had ever asked me to do it.' So he said, 'Come back, dear friend, come back; I am very busy, but come back.' So with an earnest gesture he led me back to his study, shut the door, took the bundle of tracts out of my hand, knelt down beside me at the sofa, my hand in his, and there he prayed. I remember the prayer still. Here is the substance of it: 'Oh, what wicked hearts we have. Here we were doing God's work without ever asking God's blessing on it; could we be forgiven? Were there depths of mercy so deep as to cover the sins of two such sinners as we, kneeling here together? Here was this poor young man: he had been sinning in ignorance; would not God forgive him? Would he not grant that even yet all the prayerless tracts might be blessed? He could do it; would he not? And then, was there ever such sin as his own? Here was he, a pastor over God's flock; this young man had been committed to his charge, and he had never told him how rightly to distribute tracts. But that too would be forgiven, through the merits of the priceless blood. And then, finally, might this lesson never be forgotten, but remembered all the days of their life by both;' and then an Amen from a full heart, and again he led me to the door, and

I found myself in the street. It was a circumstance never to be forgotten, and has often since risen to my remembrance at the right moment, proving a word in season."

Those whom the voice cannot reach may be reached by letters of grace and truth. It was by a letter from his sister that W. C. Burns was awakened to spiritual life. Zeal for God will devise many ways in which to be useful to souls.

Lending plain, pointed gospel books has been much blessed. When Dr. Chalmers was brought to see the deficiencies of his legal system of salvation, through reading Wilberforce's "Practical View," he lent it to others, that they might receive through it the same blessing that he had got. Harlan Page had on the last leaf of his journal a memorandum of "Books out." He lent Baxter's "Call to the Unconverted," and others of a kindred character, suitable to awaken and convict sinners and to confirm them in faith when they had trusted in Christ. This was one of his means of usefulness. When the book is returned a conversation on its subject may fitly follow, impressing its lessons and augmenting its moral influence on the heart, so that it may produce immediate results.

The singing of gospel hymns has been used of God to win many. Every one loves sweet song and listens attentively to it. It captivates the heart. The music sinks into the emotional nature, carrying with it the

words which in the necessary reproduction of the air are recalled to the mind, and thought about, till mayhap they revolutionize the life. He who works with song uses a two-edged sword. Pure gospel on the wings of sweet melody is irresistible. One marked advantage of singing the gospel is this, that it is recalled repeatedly if the music has been good. The housewife in the kitchen, the young man at his work, the traveler on his journey, the business man at his desk, find waves of melody breaking in upon them out of the memory of the hymn that thrilled them the night before. And they catch it up and hum it over, try to recall the words, drawing out one line after another, sometimes broken, sometimes whole; but the sweetness of the music charms them into an acquaintance with the whole hymn. And that being full of precious gospel truth, what a blessing it is! It may be:

"Down at the cross where I first saw the light,
And the burden of my sin rolled away.
'Twas there by faith I received my sight,
And now I am happy all the day."

Or it may be:

"I heard the voice of Jesus say,
Come unto me and rest."

Or,

"Nothing either great or small,
Nothing, sinner, no," etc.

Or,

"Just as I am, without one plea," etc.

Or,

"Rock of Ages, cleft for me."

Or it may be a lovely duet, or trio, or quartette, which being heard abides with us as a part of ourselves. At the Central Music Hall in Chicago, at the World's Fair, Mr. Moody showed the wisdom for which he is proverbial in his conduct of the meetings. He made much of sacred song. Trained singers rendered them in the best style at every service. The song service greatly enriched the occasion and helped to make it memorable. Who that heard it will ever forget the Young Men's Quartette singing the twelfth chapter of Ecclesiastes, or Mr. Burke's rendering of "Sometime we'll understand"? What a gift it is to be able to sing sweetly! Every Christian so endowed should follow the example of Miss Frances Ridley Havergal, who gave up singing secular pieces that she might sing only sacred songs, her prayer being:

> "Take my lips, and let me sing,
> Always, only, for my King."

Whatsoever we do, we are in that to glorify God. Was it not the famous Albert Barnes, who wrote so many excellent Bible Commentaries, who said that if he had his choice he would rather sing the gospel than preach it, because of the greater effects produced? He was right. He who can, or she who can sing a beautiful gospel song effectively is an excellent gospel preacher.

The reading of the Word has wrought wonders. The simple reading of the Holy Word has convinced of sin,

opened up the way of life, brought the soul to Jesus, and established it in the faith. Indeed, God has magnified his Word above all his name. Alexander Paterson, the missionary of Kilmany, was wont, while he lived in the farmer's bothy at Cruvie, to rise early in the morning to read the Bible before going out to work. In the bothy was a fellow ploughman who took great delight in collecting and committing to memory ballads to sing at the plough. One morning, as Paterson was reading his Bible, the ballad singer awoke, asked him why he had not roused him, what he was doing, and if he would not read aloud. With great solemnity and pathos he read a passage from the Word. The arrow entered at "the joints of the harness;" the man was wounded. From that time a change was observed in him. He burned all his ballads, of which there was an immense collection, and in their stead he began to commit to memory the Psalms, and sing them.

The Rev. Newman Hall tells this beautiful story, finely illustrative of the power of the simple Word: A few persons were collected round a blind man, who had taken his station on a bridge and was reading from a Bible with raised letters. A gentleman on his way home from the city was led by curiosity to the outskirts of the crowd. Just then the blind man, who was reading the fourth chapter of the Acts, lost his place, and while trying to find it with his finger, kept repeating the last clause he had read—"None other name—

none other name—none other name." Some of the people smiled at the blind reader's embarrassment; but the gentleman went away deeply musing. He had lately become convinced that he was a sinner; he had been trying in many ways to obtain peace of mind; but religious exercises, good resolutions, altered habits, all were unable to relieve his conscience of its load and enable him to rejoice in God. When he reached his home and retired to rest these words were still heard—"None other name—none other name—none other name." And when he awoke the strain continued—"None other name—none other name—none other name." The music entered his soul and by the blessing of God he awoke to a new life. "I see it all!" said he; "I see it all! I have been trying to be saved by my own works. I see my mistake. It is JESUS who alone can save. To him I will look. Neither is there salvation in any other. For there is none other name——none other name—none other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved."

A kind invitation to go to the house of the Lord has in many cases been the occasion of conversion. Such was the case of John Williams, the martyr of Erromanga. Standing idly on the street in the city of London, waiting for some friends with whom he had promised to go to the public gardens, he was observed by a lady who invited him to go with her to church. He went. The truth preached was carried to his heart. He was con-

verted and lived a new and glorious life to its last day. Many like cases we know ourselves. Beloved, many hearts, touched in this way, would with all the delight of the Psalmist cry out, "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord. Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem."

Let every opportunity be embraced, or let opportunities be made, for doing this soul-saving work. John Brown, the author of the "Self-interpreting Bible," said as he drew near the end of his life: "Were the Lord to make me young again, I think I would study to devise other means for gaining souls than those which I have used, and prosecute them with more activity than ever I did." And James Sherman, of Surrey Chapel, London, gives this good advice: "Now, let me beg every one of you to carry a small bag with this precious corn of the gospel. When you write a letter, drop a word for Christ; it may be a seed that will take root. Speak a word for Christ wherever you go; it may be productive of a great deal of fruit. Drop a tract on the counter, or in a house; it may be a seed productive of a plenteous harvest."

The biographies of Harlan Page, Hedley Vicars, John Milne of Perth, Duncan Matheson, Brownlow North, Henry Martyn, William Pennefather, Adelaide Newton, Cæsar Malan, William Hewitson, Matthew Henry, Jerry McAuley, David Sandeman, Asahel Nettleton, and many others eminent as soul winners, are

full of helpful lessons. Some of these every Christian ought to read as a spiritual stimulant: to get shaken loose from the dead formality that presses down ordinary Christian life; to get lifted up into a purer and more bracing atmosphere; to get freed from the thraldom of use and wont, and come into communion with the noblest servants of the Lord who have lived here, and labored here, in the same conditions as those in which we now pass the time of our sojourning. Or, better than all, he ought ever to be "LOOKING UNTO JESUS," contemplating his burning zeal, his indefatigable labors, his quenchless love, his long-suffering forbearance, his entire self-sacrifice. "Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; and *walk in love*, as Christ also hath *loved* us, and *given himself* for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor."

God in his providence often calls men out of the quiet seclusion of private life into the noisy turmoil and heavy responsibility of public life, either by gradually opening up ways of usefulness, or by an unequivocal and irresistible impression of his Spirit. Their duty is clear, to leave all and follow Jesus. The call may be to teach in the Sabbath-school, or to speak in the mission-house, or to address assemblies; in either case the glorious gospel of the blessed God is what is needed, and individual dealing with souls as to its reception. To bring the soul at once to Jesus is the end

of all ministry; therefore "Jesus only" must be preached—"Jesus alone" lifted up, as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. However fully and forcibly the glad tidings may be presented on the platform, in the pulpit, or in the desk, personal effort is required as well. The driven nail must be clinched. Impressions are often made in the religious meeting that must be followed up with instructions and exhortations in the home, or on the street, or in the market. The mind may be dark, the world-influence may be strong, and the heart *is* deceitful: hence the necessity of constant attendance by the "ambassador of Christ," the spiritual physician. Great pains should be taken, much prayer made, so that he may never lose a case. Oh, to feel the weight of souls! Oh, to realize their preciousness! Oh, to travail in birth for souls till Christ be formed in them!

Declaring Christ's finished work to one solitary individual may appear a small thing to a worker gifted with eloquence and ability, and perhaps may look like a loss of time and talent. But it is not so. Consider our Saviour's going through Samaria to meet that poor lost woman that she might be saved. A great forest lay in that one acorn. Think of the Holy Spirit carrying Philip southward to Gaza to be the means of salvation to the Ethiopian eunuch, who doubtless carried the light of the gospel into the bosom of Africa. The

teaching of these incidents is evident to every spiritual mind; and those who have followed in their footsteps have reaped rich harvests, as the record of Christian work during this present century shows. They render it as delightsome to preach the gospel to one as to ten thousand. A Christian woman, with singular fidelity, exhorted William C. Burns to watch for individual souls, saying, "You may lose a jewel from your crown; though you do not lose your crown, you may lose a jewel from it." "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear."

"Go and toil in any vineyard, do not fear to over-dare;
If you want a field of labor, you can find it *anywhere.*"

III.

"LET YOUR LOINS BE GIRDED ABOUT AND YOUR LIGHTS BURNING."—LUKE 12:35.

BUT how shall the believer work so as to obtain results? This is an important question, seeing that many work much and long without achieving adequate results. Their labor goes for naught and their strength is spent in vain. They live a fruitless life, in direct opposition to the declaration of our Saviour, "He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit." "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples." As the healthy apple-tree bears abundantly fruit to reward the husbandman, so is the man of God to be fruitful in his labor. The work he does, the word he speaks, is not lost. His labor is not in vain in the Lord. He is not to carry on a barren ministry that is wasting and wearing and wearisome. The heavens above are not to be as brass and the earth beneath as iron. In answer we say that there are a few prerequisites essential, without which all will not only be useless but laggard if not legal service.

First. He must have a full, settled confidence of his own salvation and what salvation has brought him into; of his standing before God in Christ and its glorious privileges, his justification through faith, that he is accepted in the Beloved, that he is one with Christ and complete in Him. He must realize his relation to this present evil world, to sin, to the flesh, and the glorious liberty wherewith Christ hath made him free, so that he may not be entangled with any yoke of bondage, whether traditional, ecclesiastical, or theological. He must rejoice in being Christ's freeman. A soul doubtful and unbelieving is not fit for the field, nor prepared to endure hardness nor to suffer reproach. How can any one press the truth on the hearts of others who does not believe in it himself? How can any one guide another in the way in which he has not himself walked? It is he that *heareth* that is to say, "Come!" It is the *son* that is called to work in the vineyard. But there may be a very partial hearing, and a very imperfect apprehension of the full blessing of sonship, and thence will come unfitness for service and feebleness in effort. To direct the believer into the perfect knowledge of his God-given birthright in Jesus is the reason why we turn his thoughts to it. Moreover, it is essential as a preparative for service. Paul says, "We, having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we *also believe*, and therefore speak." "Yea, doubtless, I count all things

but loss for the *excellency of the knowledge* of Christ Jesus my Lord."

This faith and knowledge of the apostles is unfolded in all fulness in their epistles. John says: "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon and our hands have handled, of the Word of life. . . . declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and his Son Jesus Christ." Where there is no fellowship there will be little following. Fellowship secures following, since it imparts full joy. This position is entered into by simple faith in the Word of truth. Just as at first receiving God's testimony touching his Son saves the soul, so is it now, receiving the Spirit's testimony respecting the believer's standing sets him in a wide place—in Divine freedom; brings him, through the Holy Ghost, "into the glorious liberty of the children of God."

To see the saint's community of life with the Saviour, and his being blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in him, read the first and second chapters of the Epistle to the Ephesians; to learn his freedom from the power and pollution of sin, read the fifth, sixth, seventh, and eighth chapters of Romans, and the ninth and tenth chapters of Hebrews; to know his completeness in Christ the head, read the first and second chapters of Colossians; to understand his son-

ship and his hope, read the third chapter of the First Epistle of John.

Second. He must make diligent study of the revealed will of God that he may rightly divide it. There must be a discrimination of things that differ. The truth must be seen in its Divine order and bearings. Many a man wastes both precious time and golden opportunities through unintelligent applications. A case in point, and no doubt there are thousands like it in all lands, is that of John Berridge. He says, "I preached up sanctification very earnestly for six years in a former parish and never brought one soul to Christ. I did the same in this parish for two years without any success at all; but as soon as ever I preached Jesus Christ, and faith in his blood, then believers were added to the church *continually*—the people flocked from all parts to hear the glorious sound of the gospel, some coming six miles, others eight, and others ten, and that constantly. And now, let me ask, what is the reason why my ministry was not blessed when I preached up salvation partly by faith and partly by works? It is because this doctrine is not of God, and he will prosper no ministers but such as preach salvation in his appointed way; viz., by faith in Christ Jesus." There are truths for sinners and there are truths for saints. These must be distinguished and judiciously applied. Any mixing of them is a marring of the truth in its harmony and adaptation to special wants. Any dis-

placement of them can only breed confusion in the speaker and the hearer. The counsel the Holy Spirit gives is, "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, RIGHTLY DIVIDING THE WORD OF TRUTH."

A little careful consideration of our Saviour's mode of dealing with the Scriptures, in their bearing upon different characters and different stages of progress, will do much to rectify all misunderstanding on this point. What is required is a clear discernment of the order and bearings of the words of God, and a clear declaration of them in that same order and bearing. Dr. Chalmers, lecturing to his divinity students, touches on this important point by the way and says, "I have heard my deceased friend, Robert Hall, say of many preachers in England, that they were so encumbered with the dogmas of their creed as positively not to know in what terms so to lay down the gospel as that a plain man should know how to take it up." This from many causes obtains everywhere, and it can only be remedied in the way we suggest.

THIRD. He must have preparation of heart as well as of mind. Indeed, heart-power is what he needs most. It is heart that deals with heart. The fire that glows and burns in one heart will touch and melt others. Love alone unlocks the palaces of love. The life of the Christian is mighty to convert. It, of itself, reaches the heart and makes conquest of the will without a

word. The African traveler, H. M. Stanley, furnishes out of his own experience an impressive illustration. He says, "In 1877 I went to Livingstone as prejudiced as the biggest atheist in London. To a reporter and correspondent such as I, who had only to deal with wars, mass-meetings and political gatherings, sentimental matters were entirely out of my province. But there came for me a long time for reflection. I was out there away from a worldly world. I saw this solitary old man there and asked myself, 'How on earth does he stop here? is he cracked, or what? what is it that inspires him?' For months after we met I simply found myself listening to him, wondering at the old man carrying out all that was said in the Bible—'Leave all and follow Me.' But little by little his sympathy for others became contagious; my sympathy was aroused; seeing his piety, his gentleness, his zeal, his earnestness, and how he went quietly about his business, I was converted by him, although he had not tried to do it. How sad that the good old man should have died so soon! How joyful he would have been if he could have seen what has since happened there." Oh to have this Christlike character which works so mightily upon the hearts of others! How then may the heart be prepared? In many ways.

1. By meditation on the Word till the fire burns within and diffuses its heat and spreads its light and moves mightily the whole man. Whitefield gives us

his experience in these precious sentences: "I began to read the Holy Scriptures (upon my knees), laying aside all other books and praying over, if possible, every line and word. This proved meat indeed and drink indeed to my soul. I daily received fresh life, light, and power from above. I got more true knowledge from reading the Word of God in one month than I could ever have acquired from all the writings of men. In one word, I found it profitable for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; every way sufficient to make the man of God perfect, thoroughly furnished unto every good word and work."

2. By communion with God. Communion with others may be beneficial, and sometimes quickening, but it is less by far than we need. Says John Milne, of Perth: "Communion with the best of God's people will not compensate for the loss of communion with HIMSELF." That girds the soul with strength, that fills the heart with heavenly joys, that fits for the conflict and the strife by imparting endurance and courage and constancy. William C. Burns says in his diary: "Nov. 1, 1839. I spent the whole of this forenoon till half-past twelve in private with the Lord, and enjoyed more of his glorious presence humbling and elevating my soul than I have had for some time past when alone. Oh for a day every week to spend entirely in the secret of his presence!" We need not marvel that he goes on to tell us that he preached the same day at one o'clock

in St. George's Church, to the genteel society of Edinburgh, and that he "was carried far above the conscious desire of the favor and the conscious fear of man : and in preaching from Isaiah 42 : 21 I felt much more of the presence of the Holy Spirit enlightening my mind in the knowledge of Christ, and melting my heart under a view of his glory and his love, than I have for some time enjoyed in public."

That saintly soul, Hedley Vicars, captain of the 97th Regiment, says, "Whenever I have been brought nearest to my Saviour, even 'into the holiest by the blood of Jesus,' I have been constrained and forced 'while the fire burns' to 'speak with my tongue' and to make use of the golden hours of communion with Jesus in the solitude of my chamber to publish when 'I go without the camp' what the Lord has done for my soul; *even for me*, than whom a man more undeserving of mercy does not exist."

3. By the Divine bestowment of the Holy Spirit. That may be made through the study of the Word, or in communion—but it must be sought as a distinct blessing. "The preparation of the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue, IS FROM THE LORD." The Lord only can prepare our hearts by possessing them with the energy of the Holy Spirit. The Lord anointed Christ, according to Isaiah, to preach the good tidings. The apostles were forbidden to go forth into the world until they were endowed with power from on high. On

the day of Pentecost the power of the Highest rested upon them and their words were weapons of might, pulling down the strongholds of Satan, and setting free the prisoners. The energy of the Holy Ghost is what every one requires for success: without it there can be none. Without the Spirit's presence "we are like other men," powerless, profitless. "Ye shall receive POWER after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you." Acts 1 : 8. Power with God and power with man. Without this all is vain, empty, formal. But with it a stone from the brook, rough and small, cast by a weak arm, will smite down blaspheming Goliaths and vanquish a host. Great stress is laid by us, in our carnal wisdom, on philosophic disquisitions, sublime thoughts, solid sentences, logically-linked arguments, grand discourses, with the accompaniments of a good presence, a proper delivery, and bewitching music; but all these without "POWER FROM ON HIGH" only show our nothingness. Miss Adelaide Newton, whose aim in all her work was to win souls, one day asked her sister to share part of her district in distributing books and tracts. Her sister having observed how long she waited at the different doors, before going in, asked her the reason of this on the way home: "Do you always wait, when you knock at a door, till they open it?" "No," was her reply, "but I always like to wait a moment before I knock, to ask for the Holy Spirit to be my mouth and teach me what to say in each house." "I have often thought of

it since," her sister adds, "and have attributed to it her wonderful success among the poor whom she visited."

It is our unspeakable privilege to claim the promise of the Father. It is ours. But we must claim it that we may be filled with the Spirit. For this we must take time. Tarry ye until ye be endued with power from on high. Are we not too often in overgreat haste? We run before we are ready. We speak with undigested and disordered thought. We trust to our own skill and our own shrewdness, and so often fail. Ah, we require to wait on the Lord. Tarry till we receive power from on high. In this, patient waiting is no loss. Moreover, we need a thorough self-emptiness, that the Spirit may fill us. We need to be nothing, that God may be all in all. Thus, and thus only, shall we have a true heart and a right spirit—Christ's Spirit. A right spirit is the chief thing in ministry. Work done in a bad spirit is worse than spoiled, it is made evil. Dr. Nettleton, famous all over America as an evangelist in the beginning of this century, observes: "We may talk about the best means of doing good; but after all the greatest difficulty lies in doing it with a proper spirit. *Speaking the truth in love. In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves. With the meekness and gentleness of Christ.* I have known anxious sinners drop the subject of religion in consequence of a preacher addressing

them in an angry tone." Hence the injunction, "Let the same mind be in you which also was in Christ." When the heart is subject to Divine preparation, then we gain that earnestness that consumes all obstacles as stubble; that faith that accounts nothing impossible; that tearful tenderness that subdues the most wayward spirit; that patience that will wait, godlike, to be gracious; that discrimination that of some has compassion, making a difference, and other saves with fear, pulling them out of the fire; that charity that beareth all that things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.

Fourth. There should also be much prayer made for those with whom we are dealing, that the Spirit of God may come down upon them, convicting them of sin, righteousness and judgment. We hold up Christ, we preach the truth of the gospel, but it is the power of the Highest which is needed to convert to God. Let us never go a-warfaring at our own charges. God must fight for us if we are to win the battle. His Spirit must carry home the Word, and take the fortress of the heart, and bring into subjection the whole nature. The wonderful work at the Kirk of Sholts in Scotland, in 1636, called sometimes "the Covenanters' Pentecost," was the result, Dr. White of Edinburgh tells us, of the prayer of Lady Culross and her companions, who had waited on God all through the previous night. So may every gracious work be traced to some persistent plead-

er at the throne of grace for the manifestations of divine power. We have many instances of this in the lives of Luther, Whitefield, Wesley, Burns, Finney, Moody, Spurgeon and every man used of God in the conversion of souls. Knox cried with lips and life and heart together, "Lord, give me Scotland or I die." And how grandly has that heart cry been answered; what an uplifting influence Scotland has had on the world! It has been one of its brightest examples as well as one of its greatest teachers in self-sacrificing devotion to Jesus Christ.

FIFTH. There must be added to this, faith in God. That is, such a resting in God that we shall feel confident that his Word shall be fulfilled. Our Lord's word to his disciples, when they marvelled that the barren fig tree had perished at his rebuke, was, "Have faith in God." God's word never fails. Heaven and earth shall pass away but God's word shall not till all of it is fulfilled. How grand is the life of faith!

George Muller, of Bristol, whose life has been a nineteenth-century marvel, tells us what faith is. No doubt it will be a revelation to many of us. When he asked God for anything, and did not receive it at once, he asked again next day, and if the answer came not next day he kept on asking, day after day, week after week, month after month, year after year, five, ten, fifteen, twenty years, till the answer came. This is faith. He believed God. How much do we need that

persevering faith, that overcoming faith, that conquering faith in working for Jesus! "All things are possible to him that believeth."

Having then these pre-requisites—a knowledge of salvation and the things that accompany it; a mind full of the truth, well understood and divided; a heart prepared by the power of the Holy Ghost, and much prayer offered for the manifestation of the Holy Spirit in those who hear the word, and firm faith in God's truth and faithfulness—go work to-day in God's vineyard. Go tell the story of the cross plainly, pointedly, clearly, and simply, as God himself has told it. Tell it without any of the adornments of human wisdom, without any of the fine-spun conceits of human philosophy, without any of the improvements of human doctors. Just as it is, speak it. Have a firm and unfaltering faith in the pure and simple Word of God. It is God speaking on earth into dull and heavy ears. "The dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live." It is God's fire burning into the soul; it is God's hammer breaking the stony heart. "Is not My word like as a fire? saith the Lord; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?" It is the sword of the Lord that pierces through every coat of armor and displays the hidden character. "The word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and mar-

row, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."

Paul counsels Timothy—and it is well to remember that he does so under the guidance of the Holy Ghost—to "PREACH THE WORD," and this counsel is given with solemn circumstance: "I charge thee, therefore, before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom, PREACH THE WORD; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine." There is nothing like the Word, and nothing but the Word, for this warfare. Says one who had large experience: "When I first came to the university I applied myself diligently to my studies, thinking human learning to be a necessary qualification for a divine, and that no one ought to preach unless he had taken a degree in the university. Accordingly I studied the classics, mathematics, philosophy, logic, metaphysics, and read the works of our most eminent divines; this I did for twenty years, and all the while was departing more and more from the truth as it is in Jesus, and vainly hoping to receive that light and instruction from human wisdom *which could only be had from the Word of God.*" The Word is the Spirit's own instrument; as such we should ever honor it.

There are many passages that have been specially blessed of God to the salvation of immortal souls, such as: "God so loved the world that he gave his only be-

gotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life;" "Him that cometh unto Me I will in no wise cast out;" "He suffered, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God;" "He was wounded for our transgressions;" "All we like sheep have gone astray, but the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all;" "Once in the end of the world hath He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself;" "And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son." These tell the good news in a word, and they suggest man's deep need and man's great danger. Often it is needful to create a sense of need and a feeling of danger; that is done by the Holy Spirit through such scriptures as these: "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;" "This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." In the Word, through the accompanying power of the Holy Ghost, there is everything that is required to give rest to the anxious, light to the darkened, joy to the sorrowful, hope to the downcast, life to the dead. Then use faithfully the pure Word of the living God. Take opportunities and *make* opportunities for using it. Do not be afraid of bringing into prominence your own individuality. Are you sympathetic? are you learned? are you wise? are you plain and honest? are you figurative in your speech? are you parabolic in your

modes of thought? are you diffident, but above all want to be used in rescuing some poor soul from the devouring sea? Then be true to yourself as to your nature, and be true to God as to his truth, and go forward doing what you can; what God gives you to do. Seek means to arrest attention, then speak the word. Get the ear, then reach out unto the heart. Speak the Word lovingly, largely, boldly. Do not be sparing of the seed. Your harvest will be according to your sowing. Let seeking the salvation of souls be your ruling passion. Concentrate your mind and heart and energies here. Care not though the world may call you mad. Of Jesus they said, "He is beside himself;" and of his eminent follower, Paul, "Much learning hath made thee mad." The same honorable mention has been made of many since. Would to God it were said of more from the same cause! Burning earnestness and intense concentration are needed to do much in this godlike service. Said John Foster: "He who would do some great thing in this short life must apply himself to the work with such a concentration of his forces as to idle spectators, who only live to amuse themselves, must look like insanity." Out of a loving heart speak of the unsearchable riches of the Saviour. Entreat men to come unto him. Beseech them to be reconciled to God. Warn them against delay. Press them to hear now, to believe to-day, to enter into the possession of peace that passeth knowledge without delay.

The Saviour has suffered for sin; the Spirit convinces of sin; God waits graciously to forgive sin. Work, and go your way singing—

"Where'er I go I'll tell the story of the cross;
In nothing else my soul shall glory save the cross.
Yea, this my constant theme shall be—
Through time and in eternity—
That Jesus tasted death for me on the cross."

IV.

"MY WORD SHALL NOT RETURN UNTO ME VOID."—ISAIAH 55:11.

ENCOURAGEMENTS are not wanting to those who faithfully serve the Lord with gladness.

Conscience in man is always, however seared or perverted, on the side of the Christian worker. It ever speaks for truth and right and God, even though its voice be smothered by mountain heaps of transgression. Even among the heathen, who had sunk into the dreadful conditions delineated in the first chapter of the Romans, we are told that their consciences bear witness, their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another. The truth of God is for the conscience, appeals to the conscience, arouses the conscience. It stirs up in the heart of man either an unallayable uneasiness, or else rings its warning in his ear with clarion note. The word spoken without strengthens and encourages and makes more effective conscience within. The heart of man is also on the side of the Christian worker. Its bright hopes, its mighty aspirations, its unquenchable cravings, its deep

needs, and its boundless desires, can be realized only through faith in and union with Jesus. As Augustine saith, "Thou madest us for thyself, and our heart is restless until it rests in thee."

The Spirit of God is specially interested in the proclamation of Gospel truth. It is his office to take of the things of Christ and show them unto the soul. He testifies of Christ as he is lifted up on the cross. He carries the word home with convicting energy to the heart. He stands beside every faithful messenger of the Lord as he delivers his message and gives him guidance, and so illumines the Word that it shines in the mind like a sun and conquers the will for God.

The chief hope of the man who utters the truth that saves is in the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. It is his work to convince of sin because men believe not on Christ; of righteousness, because Christ has gone to his Father; and of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged. And he does this through the Word of God declaring Christ's putting away sin by the sacrifice of himself, bearing our sins in his own body on the tree, that we being dead to sin should live unto righteousness. This is the sheet-anchor of the confidence of the herald of God's mercy in Christ Jesus. It is an inspiration that lifts up and sustains the soul. It is the Spirit that quickeneth. He quickens his minister and those who hear the message at his mouth.

The examples of successful working recorded in the Word and elsewhere strengthen faith. Look at that carpenter who is ever at work in the vineyard of the Lord: Harlan Page is his name. In the Sabbath-school, in the factory, in the boarding-house, in the work-room of the Tract Society, in the monthly concert of Sabbath school teachers, he is ever busy, instructing, winning, and inciting both sinners and saved. Consider that day-laborer, Robert Annan; with tracts in hand for distribution, with chalk in pocket to write Scripture sentences on the pillars and pavements, and with love in his heart and ready words on his tongue, he is ever engaged for the glory of his Lord. No time is lost: his daily labor is dignified with duty for Christ performed, his nightly toil is that of angelic ministry in the lanes and closes of Dundee. Time would fail to speak of David Brainerd, Charles Finney, Legh Richmond, Charles Simeon, Billy Bray, Joseph Alleine, Alexander Patterson, Rowland Hill, William Carvosso, and the long line of Christ's Legion of Honor who have blessed this earth with their seraphic zeal and saintly presence and clustering fruits. What they accomplished is within the reach of every one of us if we would but use our talents and opportunities well. What man has done man may do.

The words of precious promise also cast their cheering light from the page of revelation into the heart with quickening energy. Have you been casting

bread upon the waters, and do you long for its return? fear not; thou shalt find it not many days hence. God's word shall not return unto him void; it shall accomplish that which he pleaseth, and prosper in the thing whereto he sendeth it. It is the incorruptible seed. It may lie long, in dark, damp, hearts; but, like the seed sown in the fields, ever and anon a ray of light will strike in upon it, and at length it will germinate and put forth, first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear. The Rev. John Flavel preached a sermon at Dartmouth, England, from these words: "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema, Maranatha." At the close of the service when he arose to pronounce the benediction he paused and said, "How shall I bless this whole assembly, when every person in it who loveth not the Lord Jesus Christ is Anathema, Maranatha?" The solemnity of this address deeply affected the audience, and one gentleman was so overcome by his feelings that he fell senseless to the floor. In the congregation was a lad named Luke Short, then about fifteen years old, and a native of Dartmouth. Shortly after hearing the sermon he came to America, where he passed the rest of his life. He lived to be a hundred years of age, and even at that time his mental faculties were little impaired and his physical strength so good that he wrought on his farm. He had lived up to this time in carelessness and sin; he was now a "sinner a hundred years old," and apparently

ready to "die accursed." But one day as he sat in his field he busied himself in reflecting on his past life. Recurring to the events of his youth his memory recalled Flavel's discourse, a considerable part of which he was able to remember. The blessing of God accompanied his meditations; conviction was followed by repentance, and this aged sinner found peace. What an encouragement to use freely God's word! It endureth forever. Therefore work on. "In the morning sow thy seed, in the evening withhold not thine hand; for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether both shall be alike good." Blessed are ye that sow beside all waters! He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall DOUBTLESS come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him. Attend to the warning and receive the encouragement the Lord gives through the Scripture: "This I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully." Your reaping shall be proportionate to your sowing. This is great encouragement to increase of love and labor, surely!

There is another source of heart-quickening in this: that the Lord marks your service. He says, "I know thy works." How inspiring is the Saviour's eulogy of the woman who anointed him with the box of ointment of spikenard: "She hath done what she could." Right motives dignify the lowest labor: a holy intention

sheds a glory over it. Yours may be no dazzling services, no obtrusive, noisy doings. You cannot do much yet, but do what you can in the name of the Lord. Remember God has stars as well as suns in his system, and both serve his purpose. The brooklet that sings on its way to the sea does its work as well as the far-rolling Mississippi, or the great St. Lawrence, or the deep-resounding sea. And though your labor may be lowly it may through its earnest love gather into largeness by and by. It is not that which *seems* greatest that always is so. Samuel Martin says truly: "Many a quiet worker may be doing more for the kingdom of God than some others who have a name known throughout Christendom. If God gives us a name let us feel it as a trust; but if not, let us remember that he knows our work and if we are working as his servants he thoroughly appreciates us." Oh, then, be encouraged. God is with you, the Saviour's eye is upon you, the Holy Spirit is helping you. You shall succeed, you shall do good. "Let us not be weary in well-doing; for in due season we shall reap if we faint not."

"The smallest effort is not lost:
Each wavelet on the ocean tossed
Aids in the ebb-tide or the flow;
Each raindrop makes some floweret blow,
Each struggle lessens human woe."

V.

ALWAYS ABOUNDING IN THE WORK OF THE LORD.—
1 Cor. 15:58.

HOW much there is to stir the redeemed soul to unceasing labors! If Paul's spirit was stirred within him when he saw the literary and philosophic Athens wholly given to idolatry, certainly there is much more to move the heart of the follower of Jesus to-day, as he sees on every hand hundreds of pretendedly pious and openly impious, men of repute and men of no repute—vile, vicious, virtueless—all rushing with the madness of a mountain torrent into the mouth of hell.

But none is beyond hope and redemption. The very worst are often the first to repent. In the ministry of our Lord the lowest down in the mire of the world, crushed and bruised by its selfishness and sin, were the most accessible to the truth. The parable of the prodigal son has this lesson in it. He seemed quite gone, lost in every way, down in the dark depths, beyond hope of recovery, but he repented, and came back to the Father's house and heart, and was royally wel-

comed and feasted. The publicans and harlots pressed into the kingdom of God, while the self-righteous Pharisees stood murmuring without. Never let us lose hope of any, even the very worst. Christ Jesus is able to save unto the uttermost. Where sin abounds grace does much more abound.

There is hope for the outcast, the sons of Belial, the children of evil, because they know what they are; they feel their desperateness and destitution; they are in their own estimation "sinners," and therefore ready to hear of deliverance and life; as the man was to whom Jesus said, "*Dost thou believe on the Son of God?*" At once he answered and said, "Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him?" When Jesus told him, he believed and worshipped. Christlike dealing with the worst wins them. To touch them and show them respect heals their backslidings, as our Saviour's touch drove away the foul plague of the leper. Here, in the deeps, haste to the rescue! This world lies underground in the dark; night is its day; evil its work; death and damnation its wages. We often touch the outskirts of this land of woe where no bright hope casts its heartening ray. Let us enter it with light and love and life. "Is not the Lord gone out before us?"

There is another world, open to the sunlight but none the less in the arms of the wicked one. This is what we often call *the religious world.* The world that professes godliness but does not possess it; that has

a name to live but is dead; that has the form of godliness but denies the power thereof. This religious world needs conversion and salvation and freedom from the thraldom of sin and Satan. It is deceiving itself with a mere name. It cares nothing for the true nature of a religious life, which is holy, self-sacrificing and separate from sinners. Ah me! is not this so-called religious world without God? at enmity against God? It cries out in all its words and acts, "*No God!*" Satan's battle banner floats and flutters in every breeze. Thousands are perishing under his onsets. Thousands are tossed about and driven by his dark delusions. Their cry comes ringing out of their condition: "*Come and help us!*" Think of his machinery! Consider his traps and snares! The theatres draw down multitudes into darkness by ministering to their vices; the concert-rooms and opera-houses carry away numberless crowds into captivity through sheer thoughtlessness; the pleasure parties and the dance drive all seriousness from the mind; the card tables, where precious time is spent as though it were worthless, and not given for high uses—the drinking houses, from the princely hotel to the miserable gin-shop—are recruiting-sergeants for the devil.

Go a step or two higher, and think of the fashionable impropriety of speaking plainly of the best interests of the soul; the "rudeness" charged against one who dares to defy conventional usages and speak out

concerning the Lord Jesus; the arrest laid upon true spirituality of thought and word and life by the strong and almost resistless tide of world-serving. Oh how plain it is that Christ and his brethren are in open rejection. What incitement springs hence for working for Christ!

Add to these the announcement that "*Time is short.*" Oh, how short! While we read it flies, never to return. To-day never repeats itself. Once gone, with all its privileges and possibilities and opportunities, it comes again no more. What an inciting force to earnest labor it is to consider that *we go through this world-scene but once.* Leaving undone what we might do for Jesus to-day, it remains for ever undone. Let us then write this Scripture on our heart and eye and memory: *Time is short! Time is short!* and now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation.

Dr. A. H. Bonar once preached in St. Peter's, Dundee, upon the text, "Thine eyes shall see the King in his beauty." Mr. McCheyne said to him as they walked home together, "Brother, I enjoyed your sermon; it was sweet. You and I, and many in our congregations, shall see the King in his beauty. But, my brother, you forgot there might be many listening to you to night who, unless they are changed by the grace of God, shall never see him in his beauty." How nobly faithful was that! Grand indeed! It is said that Dr. Bonar never after these words of kindly re-

proof preached a sermon in which he did not commend Christ to the unsaved. This a lesson we need to keep in mind in connection with the truth that *Time is short.*

Again, God is gracious, and is waiting, ever ready to receive and bless the returning prodigal. He cries, "Turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die?" "Come unto Me, and I will give you rest." "Him that cometh unto Me I will in no wise cast out." To prove and proclaim the genuineness of his love "He gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." How encouraging this is to us as we entreat men to be reconciled to God.

We cannot make too much of the love of God. With our poor conceptions we dip it up as a child dips up the sea with a tea-spoon. Edward Irving's one sentence to the poor dying consumptive, "God loves you," transformed him. Henry Moorehouse's sermons on God's love enlightened the mind of Mr. Moody and gave his thoughts of God marvellous enlargement. Oh press God's love; pray that God's love may be believed, accepted, relied on. That is one of the mightest weapons to wield on human hearts!

Again, *Eternity is near.* Eternity in which everything is fixed for ever and ever. Eternity which is the life time of the immortal spirit. Eternity—who can measure it, who can describe it, who can conceive it aright! Our brief life time here determines what

eternity is to be. As the tree falls so it must lie. The divine judgment is uttered in these words: "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he that is filthy, let him be filthy still; and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still; and he that is holy, let him be holy still." There is no change of moral condition in eternity, except it be that the soul sweeps on in the line of its development: the holy one becoming holier, the wicked growing more wicked. And in this way blessing coming more to the good, and cursing more and more to the bad.

Christ says in connection with the words quoted above, "And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give to every man according as his work shall be." Just think: a faithful word may alter everything. Robert Annan wrote "Eternity," on the pavement and it changed hearts as hard as stone. Work for eternity is great work. Everything dwindles before it into nothingness. What inspiration is here to diligence and persevering effort!

Again, a dreadful doom awaits the lost. They "shall go away into *everlasting punishment*." For ever and ever shall they be in misery unspeakable. The smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever. Oh, to save men from such an end! It is awful to think of; what shall it be to endure? Beloved, cry aloud, and spare not. Warn, exhort, entreat every man to flee from the wrath to come. Ah! this is writ-

ten on the walls of hell, which every eye sees and every hearts feels : Wrath to come ! *Wrath to come!* WRATH TO COME !

If we rightly appreciate the salvation we have in Christ ; if we rejoice in there being no condemnation now to us, but life, sonship, and blessing ; and if our eyes are open to see the unrenewed in their guilt, under the delusions of the evil one, and if we have hearts to feel for them, surely we have power to work for their salvation : surely we *cannot rest* until we do. To be the means of saving one soul from death is to gain more than a world can bestow in all its fame, honor, glory, goods, and gifts. Then, beloved, work on, work on ! Be diligent, be earnest, be entirely devoted. Dr. Lyman Beecher, shortly before his death, was asked by a friend, "*What is the greatest of all things?*" To whom he answered, "It is not theology, it is not controversy, but it is to save souls." John Berridge, that devoted servant of the Lord, seeing the utter ignorance of the way of salvation through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ that prevailed throughout England, entered largely into evangelistic work, preaching on all occasions and at all times. This gave great offence to his idle brother-clergymen ; they therefore complained of him to the bishop, who sent for him and reproved him for preaching at all hours and on all days. "My lord," said he, modestly, "I preach only at two times." "Which are they, Mr. Berridge?" "In season and

out of season, my lord." So, beloved, preach "in season and out of season." Never be idle. Learn to sing from the heart,

"'T is sweet to work for Jesus
In this life's little day ;
To spread abroad the joyful sound,
As those forgiven may ;
To tell His loving-kindness,
His promises so true,
To urge the young that they may come
And trust this Saviour too.

"'T is sweet to work for Jesus ;
Be this our one desire,
Our purpose still to do His will,
Whatever He require.
No action is too lowly,
No work of love too small ;
If Christ but lead, we may indeed
Well follow such a call.

"'T is sweet to work for Jesus ;
Oh weary not of this,
But onward press with cheerfulness
Though rough the pathway is.
Hold on, unmoved and patient,
Till He shall call thee home,
With joy to stand at God's right hand
To serve before the throne."

"Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that YOUR LABOR IS NOT IN VAIN IN THE LORD."

VI.

LO, I AM WITH YOU ALWAY.—MATT. 28:20.

IT often happens that the one who works for Jesus in seeking the salvation of men has to work for a time all alone. He is a solitary standard bearer. Her majesty's recruiting sergeant usually has a fife and drum attending him, as he goes forth decked out to attract recruits to his regiment; but the King's servant fares forth in more humble guise. He carries the good news of a salvation he himself enjoys in his heart. He finds none who have sympathy with him, none likely to support him. He has through his own faithful dealing to raise up individuals like-minded with himself, who may stand beside him and his work; and until this takes place he must endure hardness as a good soldier of the cross. He must take up his cross and follow Christ. And then he will realize, as Jesus declared, that he is not alone, for the Father is with him. Paul was often alone in his brave battle, but he too had to say, when no man stood by him, but all forsook him;

"Nevertheless the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me." Ah, is it not worth much to be forsaken of men just that we may be favored of God? Our extremity is God's opportunity. It is not an evil without compensation to be alone witnessing for God. No doubt, it is a greater trial but out of it come greater triumphs. It is a harder fight to stand alone and endure the contradiction of sinners against one's self, but when the victory is gained it is rich in satisfactions.

What may one man do? Some may be ready to say, and to say thoughtlessly, Hardly anything. What is one among so many? One counts for nothing! One can do nothing! And so thoughtless unbelief goes on, forgetting both facts and declarations. What does God say? One shall chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight. "One thousand shall flee at the rebuke of one." Isa. 30:17. Did not our Lord tread the winepress alone? Did not his solitary arm bring salvation? and is it not a fact in the history of the world that much of the best work has been done by individuals, singlehanded. Think of Livingstone's life and work in Equatorial Africa; of Robert Moffat's work in Southern Africa; of Paton's work in the New Hebrides; of Dr. Geddie's work in the same group of islands, which when he arrived had not a Christian, and when he left had not a pagan; of Dr. Mackay's work in Northern Formosa; of the work

of John Pounds among the waifs of Portsmouth; of Robert Raikes' work among the children of Gloucester, which set the key for a music the world has been singing every since!

Dr. Cameron Lees in his "Life and Conduct" observes: "The greatest works that have been done have been done by the Ones. No learned society discovered America, but one man, Columbus. No parliament saved English liberties, but one man, Pym. No confederate nations rescued Scotland from her political and ecclesiastical enemies, but one man, Knox. By one man, Howard, our prisons were purified. By one woman, Miss Nightingale, our disgraceful nursing system was reformed. By one, Clarkson, the reproach of slavery was taken away. God in all ages has blessed individual effort, and if we are strong enough to take up any special line of benevolent and Christian work that seems open to us we should not shrink from it." Let us never forget Christ's words, "Alone, yet not alone, for the Father is with me." There is a splendid spiritual culture and training in this high consciousness. How much we can bear because of it—all the reproach and all the contempt and contumely that may be cast upon us. Did not the people say to Jesus: "Thou hast a devil"? Did not his friends say: "He is beside himself"? Did not Festus say to Paul with a loud voice (showing how deeply he was moved), "Paul, thou art beside thyself: much learning doth make thee

mad"? And at the judgment seat of Pilate did not the Jews cry out against Christ, "Crucify him! Crucify him"? The esteem in which even professedly religious people held the earnestness and zeal of such saintly men as Robert M. McCheyne and Andrew A. Bonar is seen in such a question as this, asked touching McCheyne: "How are you getting on with *that wild man from Dundee?*" and the reply being, "Mr. Bonar is bad enough, but that man is ten times waur."

When Richard Knill began to distribute tracts to the militia at Barnstaple they formed a circle about him and swore at him till he wept. And so is it in this lost world always. "Therefore the world hateth you" because you are not of it. This is the seal of the God-sent man. And it has its uses. It frequently make the truth memorable to the persecutor. The very heat of his heart harrows it up to receive and to remember the truth. It is thereby planted deep, and in course of time it puts forth its gracious and saving power. This anger is a thousand times better than stolid indifference. When it rises one ought to follow the practice of Duncan Matheson at the Scotch Fairs. When a row was made to stop his preaching he kept on uttering God's words of invitation and warning and entreaty to sinful and rebellious men. Many hearts did they enter like fiery arrows, from which there was no rest till rest was found in Christ.

Another use of this opposition and conflict is that it puts to proof the faith of the worker. Its strain tests all his graces. It helps to bring out his strength, and to take away his fear of man, and to make him look to God. It removes him from the deceits of self-confidence to rest on the strong arm of the Lord. It gives him courage and self-control and ease in the most difficult positions. And so it makes him an inspiration to others. As the oak is strengthened by the tempest, and the sailing vesel pushed onward by the storm, so is the Christian worker benefited by his adverse experiences. As the frost of winter mellows the hard clods of earth in the field so do these miserable and dreary days break down the stiff clay of self-conceit and self-trust in the soul, and make it more productive of true faith and love and goodness. These are among the "all things" that "work together for good to them that love God and are the called according to his purpose." In doing honestly what God wants us to do we need never fear as to the results, either temporal or eternal.

"Stand up! stand up for Jesus!
Ye soldiers of the cross;
Lift high his royal banner,
It must not suffer loss.
From victory unto victory
His army shall he lead,
Till every foe is vanquished
And Christ is Lord indeed.

"Stand up! stand up for Jesus!
Stand in his strength alone:
The arm of man will fail you;
Ye dare not trust your own;
Put on the gospel armor,
And, watching unto prayer,
Where duty calls or danger
Be never wanting there."

VII.

GIVE ATTENDANCE TO READING.—1 TIM. 4:13.

PAUL the aged lays this command on Timothy, his son in the gospel: "Give attendance to reading." And this seems to stand in vital connection with other things of moment. "Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all. Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them; for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee." In the second epistle Paul tells him to "do the work of an evangelist"—just the work to which every saved soul is called: to testify of Christ's saving power, to preach the word of the gospel, to tell the old, old story of Jesus and his love to all who have not yet accepted him within the limits of his world.

Now, in doing this, freshness of heart, fullness of statement, and scriptural proportion in doctrine are

needed, and therefore attendance must be given to reading, that the message may be from God, and at the same time fitted for the minds of those to whom each one is sent. But some one may ask, Read what? First and foremost, *the Bible.* Such an acquaintance should be had with that, from Genesis to Revelation, that God's thoughts, God's laws, God's picturesque foreshadowings of Christ and his work as a Redeemer in the Old Testament, and the fulfillment of all in the New, should be clearly seen. Throughout the whole it is one gospel: salvation by substitution; salvation by an atoning sacrifice; the Just dying for the unjust; the blood making atonement for the soul. This reading underlies everything in the life of a godly man. It stands related to everything. It keeps his doctrine sound, his statements certain and clear cut, his work good, and his own life pure and happy. Chrysostom learned the Bible by heart. That is where the Hebrew Psalmist put God's Word, in the hiding of his heart.

Isaac Ambrose, who wrote two large volumes on "Looking unto Jesus," always set apart one month in the year for seclusion in a hut in a wood at Garstang. That is the secret of power: converse with God through his Word. Thence the message comes fresh as water from the spring, and satisfying to every hearer.

But there are other books besides the Bible. The Bible must ever be the *One Book*, but we may read others, especially those that are freighted with holy

thought and Christian feeling, those that will nourish our life with large experiences and wide knowledge of divine things. To-day there are many of these : books that will charge the atmosphere about us with spiritual ozone ; that will keep our minds clear in their views of saving truth, and our hearts mellow and sympathetic with sinful men in their lost condition. We mention them, not in order of merit, but as they come.

There are the books of one of the choicest spirits in America, Dr. Theodore Cuyler, late of Lafayette Avenue Presbyterian Church, Brooklyn. Take his "Newly Enlisted" and his "Heart Life" for a tonic. Dr. Cuyler always grips the heart and girds one with power for every good work.

There is "American Heroes in the Mission Field"—stories of godly and self-sacrificing heroism, and earnest toil for the spiritual welfare of the millions lying in heathen darkness. There are the lives of Henry Havelock, the soldier, John G. Paton, and Uncle John Vassar, foreign and home missionaries laden with wisdom and fired with zeal and indefatigable in labor. They carry one into an atmosphere that is bracing, and invigorate his soul with the loftiest considerations and present to it the noblest examples.

There are the story of "Mary Jones and her Bible," and the life of Mary Lyon, and the life of Dr. Duff, all laden with the myrrh and cassia of the blessed gospel.

"Christie's Old Organ" may be read with great advantage, as it illustrates with a beautiful and sweet simplicity the way of life. "Jessica's First Prayer" gives another side of the same kind of holy Christlike service.

The life of Duncan Matheson, the Scottish evangelist, is brimful of interest and spiritual power, and its suggestion is exceedingly rich and varied; while that of Harlan Page, the devoted depositary of the American Tract Society, shows how seeking the spiritual good of men may be woven like threads of gold into the web of an engrossing occupation. How numerous are the books, great and small, that might be proposed as spiritual stimuli to the Christian worker: the lives of Asahel Nettleton, Philip Henry, Edward Payson, Francis Ridley Havergal, David Brainerd, Adelaide Newton, John Vine Hall, Fidelia Fiske, Brownlow North, Agnes Jones, and many others of kindred spirit: all quickening, uplifting, enlightening and strengthening. Perusing them we hold a very close and real fellowship with the best. One cannot do better than saturate his soul with them. Drink deeply into them. Read, and read, and read them again. They are not abstract treatises of truth. They are the truth alive, truth transmuted into experiences, truth embodied in feelings and in actions, just what every worker requires: truth in all its sweet attractiveness and glorious power; truth in the living person.

It matters much with whom we hold communion. We catch their accent, we look along their line of vision, we breathe their spirit, we think and feel with them. They color and character our life. Their influence plays upon us and in the most subtle way transforms us, changes us into their likeness. How important, therefore, is it that we should be much with Christ, ever with Christ and those who are near to him and in living fellowship with him ; whose faces are full of his light, whose hearts are full of his love, whose lives are full of his power, who are channels of his grace. Then shall we ever be ready to witness a good confession. We shall be in line. To do something will require no effort, no stepping up into new conditions. We are in the right conditions constantly, being in fellowship with Jesus. Then we never can be taken at unawares. Like the Roman sentinel, we shall always be at our post, on the alert, doing the Master's will ; transmitting the healing light and virtue that come to us ; being distributers of the mercy and grace of God. Then shall we, all through our new life in Christ, do what Dr. Samuel Johnson did to his physician on his death-bed—declare that there is no salvation but in the propitiatory sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

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